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ABSTRACT

This report provide commentary and recommendations by the Kansas State Legislative Educational Planning Committee in regard to several areas of postsecondary education. It recommends the introduction of legislation to change the professional scholarship programs administered by the Kansas Board of Regents to make them more consistent; supports the recommendations of the State Treasurer's Task Force on Postsecondary Education Savings Plans; supports the development and implementation of community college core indicators; expresses its intent to monitor community college customized training programs and concurrent enrollments; supports adequate funding for area vocational schools and technical colleges; expresses its support for student assistance programs that target low- and lower-middle income students; and makes plans to meet during the 1999 legislative session with representatives of postsecondary education to discuss higher education reform. The report also addresses the Vision 2020 plan to transform Kansas Regents Universities, adult basic education and English as a second language programs, Washburn University goals and strategic planning, the Education Commission of the States, concurrent enrollment issues, amendments to the Dental Practice Act, transfer and articulation agreements, and high school weighted grade point averages. (MDM)

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ED 430 459

Report of the Legislative Educational Planning Committee to the 1999 Kansas Legislature

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December 1998

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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

PLANNING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the introduction of legislation that makes changes to the professional scholarship programs administered by the Kansas Board of Regents to make them more consistent; supports the recommendations of the State Treasurer's Task Force on Postsecondary Education Savings Plans; supports the development and implementation of community college core indicators; expresses its intent to monitor community college customized training programs and concurrent enrollments; supports adequate funding for area vocational schools and technical colleges; expresses its support for student assistance programs that target low- and lower-middle income students; and makes plans to meet during the 1999 Legislative Session with representatives of postsecondary education to discuss higher education reform.

BACKGROUND

The Legislative Educational Planning Committee (LEPC) is a statutorily-authorized committee charged with planning for public and private postsecondary education in Kansas. The Committee may initiate its own studies, in addition to proposals assigned by the Legislative Coordinating Council. Among the items reviewed by the Committee during the 1998 interim were professional scholarship programs, which are the subject of legislation recommended for introduction during the 1999 Session. All items studied by the Committee are reviewed in the material that follows.

Regents Institutions

Qualified Admissions. Legislation enacted by the 1996 Legislature requires that admissions standards be imposed on freshmen entering Regents institutions, beginning with school year 2001-2002. Since the legislation was enacted, the Office of the Board of Regents has been working with the State Board of Education and individual school districts to specify a precollege curriculum that will meet Board approval.

As of the end of the 1998 interim, the Kansas Board of Regents reports that, of the 353 public high schools in Kansas, only 26 have not implemented an approved precollege curriculum. Those high schools that have not implemented the curriculum currently are working with the Board's staff, which expects all schools to have complied by February 1, 1999. There is no public high school that is not working on implementing the curriculum. In addition, 22 of the state's 23 private accredited high schools have either implemented or are working to implement the curriculum.

Committee Comment. The Committee has followed the implementation of qualified admissions with interest and is pleased that all of the public and almost all of the private accredited high schools in Kansas either have met the precollege curriculum guidelines or are in the process of meeting them. According to staff of

* H.B. 2014 was recommended by the Committee.

the Board of Regents, some of the schools for which approval is pending are waiting for a university to evaluate their curriculum (one of the steps in the process) or are working with the staff on the matter of how to categorize computer courses that are integrated into other courses.

The Committee wants to recognize the efforts the staff of the Kansas Board of Regents has made to work with the high schools and, in particular, commend it for the tact with which it has handled potentially sensitive issues, such as media interest in progress being made by schools. The staff has been professional, open, and helpful–qualities that have helped schools meet the goals of the legislation and have kept the Legislature and the public informed about the implementation of this important public policy. The Committee also commends the high schools that have worked hard to meet deadlines and better prepare their students to do college-level work.

"Vision 2020." The Committee received a report from the Kansas Board of Regents regarding its initiative, *Vision 2020: Transforming the Kansas Regents Universities for the 21st Century*. The impetus for change is circumstances that could affect the ability of the Regents institutions to provide high quality, accessible programs at a reasonable cost to students. Those circumstances include:

- resource constraints and increased competition for public funds;
- an increasing demand for services and a change in the mix of services needed, such as customized programs for specific groups of students, nontraditional service delivery formats, and services for place-bound adults;
- technological and economic changes that influence how students learn and their demand for workforce training; and
- an increasing demand for accountability in the use of resources and responsiveness to public expectations.

To address these challenges, the Kansas Board of Regents has identified five key areas for change and has directed each campus to develop a plan that identifies what steps it will take to bring about change in each of the areas and indicates the timeline for when the change will be completed. Performance data will be used in the process to measure how well the institutions achieve their goals. The five areas are the following:

1. curriculum and instruction,
2. faculty time and talent,
3. faculty development, support, and rewards,
4. operations and support processes, and
5. financing

In addition, in 1997 the Board of Regents began an eight-year cycle of academic program review.

Regents Peer Institutions. Twenty years ago, the Board of Regents decided to identify public institutions across the country that are comparable to each of the Regents universities in order to have an objective benchmark against which to measure funding levels for the Kansas schools. The institutions were to be enough like the Regents universities that comparisons were meaningful, not institutions that enjoy such high levels of funding that comparisons to Kansas are unrealistic. The criteria used to select these "peer" institutions included location in states that are similar to Kansas in terms of population and income and institutions that are similar in terms of enrollment and program emphasis. Separate peer groups were selected for the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Wichita State University, and a common peer group was selected for Emporia State University, Fort Hays State University, and Pittsburg State University.

In FY 1996, the Regents institutions were funded at 81.1 percent of their peers. This statistic causes concern among Kansas universities because it means that faculty salaries in Kansas are not competitive, which contributes to faculty members leaving Kansas to take university positions in another state. To address this concern, the Kansas Board of Regents is compiling data to support a three-year funding proposal to increase faculty salaries to the levels of the peers.

Fort Hays State University Distance Learning Initiative. Interest in academic extension and distance learning prompted the Committee to ask the President and staff from Fort Hays State University to report on current activities. Fort Hays has been actively involved in distance learning for the past ten years and currently offers 180 courses that serve more than 900 students who will be able to get degrees without ever stepping on the Fort Hays campus. Other institutions are making similar efforts to provide distance learning opportunities, but Fort Hays, in particular, has focused its resources in this area and provides services to all parts of Western Kansas, including Oberlin, Colby, Great Bend, Dodge City, Garden City, Liberal, and Elkhart, which is almost 230 miles from the Fort Hays campus. Students prefer distance education because it is convenient, flexible, adaptable to learning style preferences, and may even allow for greater interaction than traditional delivery systems. The Committee was told to expect learning in the future to be less reliant on printed material and traditional classrooms and more oriented toward portable and modular delivery formats. The message from the Fort Hays representatives was that in the future instructional and support services will be based on the convenience of the consumers, not that of campus constituencies.

Community Colleges

Community College Core Indicators. In 1997, the Council of Presidents of the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees formed a task force comprised of college representatives, two state legislators, and a community college trustee. The charge to the task force was to develop a data management system that would allow the community colleges to collect, aggregate, and report information that could be used to measure the colleges' success in meeting their role and mission. The following 13 core indicators were identified, for which data will be collected and reported:

1. student goal attainment,
2. student satisfaction,
3. student performance,
4. measurement of critical skills,
5. client assessment of programs and services,
6. student success in subsequent related courses,
7. use of technology in teaching and learning,
8. linkages between K-12 and postsecondary education,
9. attainment of affirmative action or diversity goals,
10. evaluation of Adult Basic Education, General Education Development, and English as a Second Language programs,
11. student demonstration of mastery of program outcomes,
12. participation rate in service area, and
13. access.

The intention of the task force was to implement indicators 1 through 5 by May 1999; indicators 6 through 8 by May 2000; and indicators 9 through 13 by May 2001. The recommendations of the task force were presented to the State Board of Education in November. The State Board generally endorsed the recommendations, although it is possible the order in which the indicators will be implemented will be different from the task force's recommendation. The State Board also assigned a staff position in the State Department of Education to work with the community colleges to begin designing the data collection system. A committee of community college representatives also is working with the State Department.

Committee Comment. The Committee strongly supports the initiative of the community colleges to develop a common database and is pleased that the State Board of Education has endorsed the project. The Legislature is becoming increasingly interested in ways to assess how well public institutions perform their role. The development of performance indicators, and a uniform data management system built around those indicators, will make the institutions more accountable and could lead to the development of a funding mechanism that enhances quality. The Committee urges the State Board and the community colleges to proceed with this worthwhile endeavor.

Customized Training Programs. Concerns raised during the 1998 Session about customized training programs offered by community colleges prompted an audit by the Legislative Division of Post Audit and review of the programs by two interim committees. Attention focused mainly on customized vocational training courses offered by Dodge City Community College for workers at two beef processing plants. The community college offered the courses, taught by employees of the companies, at the beef processing plants using the plants' equipment and facilities. Under the arrangement the community college had with the plants, the plants paid student tuition for their employees and the institution paid the plants rent for equipment and facilities that exactly equaled the amount of tuition paid. In addition, the community college paid the plants for instructor fees. Because the program was approved by the State Department of Education, state aid in the form of credit hour aid (paid at the rate of 2.0 times the rate for academic hours) and out-district state aid was paid. Dodge City accounted for 87 percent of the $2.1 million paid in state aid for customized training courses in FY 1997.

The post audit concluded that the arrangement was legal, but was characterized by a lack of good control on the part of the State Board of Education. The State Board responded in November of 1998 by approving guidelines that address the concerns raised by the post auditors and tighten the State Department's administration of the customized training program to be sure that all guidelines have been met. The guidelines also require that the faculty of customized training courses have a clear employment relationship with the educational institution and explicitly state that the amount of money paid by a business in the form of tuition and fees may not be offset by money paid back to the business by the educational institution in the form of rent or payment for instructional services. In addition, the Dodge City Community College Board of Trustees discontinued the institution's customized training activities with the beef packing companies under the prior arrangement in September of 1998. The community college will continue to offer customized training courses under the new guidelines approved by the State Board.

Committee Comment. The Committee supports the resolve of the State Board of Education to strengthen its control over customized training programs, although some members remain frustrated at what they consider the underlying circumstance that has contributed to the situation: a funding system that forces community colleges to rely almost entirely on credit hours generated and fails to provide alternative funding to adequately support customized training activities.

The Committee intends to monitor the implementation of the State Board's guidelines and plans to review customized training activities during the 1999 interim. In this connection, the Committee acknowledges the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Economic Development, which also reviewed the issue, and concurs with its request that the State Board keep various legislative committees, including the LEPC, informed of its activities related to customized training.

Postsecondary Education Planning Goals for 1998-2000. The Committee reviewed planning goals the State Board of Education has adopted that relate to community colleges, area vocational schools, and technical colleges. The goals generally pertain to activities over the next two years, although some will take longer to implement. Various committees have been appointed to work with the State Department to help define and implement the goals. Some of the major goals are the following:

- The statutory definition of "credit hour" for community colleges should be revised to recognize that learning takes place in ways other than "seat time."
- The proposed system to measure community college core indicators should be implemented and benchmarks to measure quality in area vocational schools and technical colleges should be developed.
- Distance learning guidelines should be developed.
- Technology grant funding should be increased and a new funding system for capital improvement projects should be developed.

- A strategic plan for technical education and workforce development should be developed.
- Community college standards for concurrent enrollment should be developed.

Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language Programs. Reports were presented to the Committee about Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs, two activities carried out by community colleges to help adults function better in society and prepare for jobs.

Adult Basic Education programs are offered by all 19 community colleges, 12 school districts, St. Marys College, and at three community-based sites. They serve more than 8,500 adults and are funded from federal and state funds, with some local support in the form of an authorized mill levy. Adults are taught basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills in order to get jobs and may work to obtain general education development (GED) degrees. Evidence indicates that public investment in the program pays off in savings due to program graduates becoming productive members of society.

English as a Second Language programs served almost 5,000 students and are intended to help people find and keep jobs. A secondary purpose is citizenship preparation. In some cases, services are provided to employers so that they can communicate with their employees who are learning to speak English. English as a Second Language programs have the same funding sources as Adult Basic Education and the two programs sometimes are taught together as part of a comprehensive family resource center that provides a variety of services. According to the Kansas Board of Regents, the number of teachers who are qualified to teach English as a Second Language programs has increased. Currently, seven public and private institutions in Kansas have teacher preparation programs in that teaching area. They are the Universities of Kansas, Emporia, Kansas State, Wichita State, and Fort Hays State and Newman College and McPherson College.

Southeast Kansas "Talent Search" Program. The Committee received a report from the Dean of Students at Neosho County Community College that Neosho County and Coffeyville Community Colleges have received a five-year grant totaling $190,000 under the federal talent search program. The program identifies and assists high school students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in college. Academic, career, and financial counseling is provided to encourage students to graduate from high school and go to college. Tutorial services, mentoring programs, workshops, and information about postsecondary institutions are provided program participants.

The Neosho County-Coffeyville project is expected to serve about 600 students in seven counties in Southeast Kansas (Woodson, Allen, Wilson, Neosho, Chautauqua, Montgomery, and Labette) and Nowata County across the border in Oklahoma. Five other four- and five-year talent search grants are being funded in Kansas that involve Cowley County, Independence, Dodge City, and Garden City Community Colleges and the University of Kansas and Wichita State University. The combined projects will reach 5,000 high school students.

Area Vocational Schools and Technical Colleges

Funding Issues. The Committee received reports from the State Department of Education about how funding for vocational capital outlay and technology equipment had been allocated and from representatives of area vocational schools and technical colleges concerning ongoing funding needs.

The 1998 Legislature approved $3.0 million for capital outlay expenditures at area vocational schools (including community colleges designated area vocational schools) and technical colleges. This money will be matched by $1.5 million from local resources and will be used to purchase instructional equipment. Requests from the schools totaled more than $6.4 million.

The 1998 Legislature also approved $1.0

million in grants to area vocational schools and technical colleges and $2.0 million to community colleges and Washburn University for technology equipment. Funding to the area vocational schools and technical colleges does not require a local match, but the appropriation to the community colleges and Washburn University requires a 50 percent local contribution. Requests from the area vocational schools and technical colleges totaled more than $2.8 million. The community colleges and Washburn University requested a combined total of almost $5.2 million.

For FY 2000, the State Board of Education is requesting $2.0 million for the vocational education capital outlay program, $2.0 million for technology grants to area vocational schools and technical colleges, and $2.0 million for technology grants to community colleges and Washburn University.

The Committee also heard concerns about the need of area vocational schools and technical colleges for funding for facilities, the need for increased support for postsecondary area vocational school student tuition, and, in the case of the Wichita Area Technical College, the need for greater funding for secondary students.

The need for facilities funding is due to area vocational schools and technical colleges, largely built in the 1960s, not having an adequate source of funding for buildings and repairs. The need for adequate state aid for postsecondary student tuition is based on the fact that the vocational and technical schools are meeting increasing demands for job training and retraining for adults and, unless the state pays its 85 percent share of postsecondary student tuition, the institutions either must cut programs or ask sponsoring districts to subsidize programs that enroll adults.

The situation in Wichita–the perception that there is inadequate funding for secondary students who take courses at the technical college–appears to be unique and is due to the governing board for the technical college (the USD 259 board of education) apparently choosing to fund secondary students enrolled at the college at a lower rate than actual program costs. Other area vocational schools and technical colleges appear to either have negotiated a better agreement with their sponsoring districts to educate secondary students or charge sending districts a cost-per-hour of instruction that covers the services provided.

Committee Comment. The Committee has long been a proponent of adequate support for area vocational schools and technical colleges because it recognizes and values the role these institutions play in providing job training and retraining for Kansas residents. The Committee encourages the Legislature to generously support the state's workforce training effort, within available resources. It calls particular attention to the institutions' plight regarding the lack of direct mill levy support for facilities and the limited amount of state aid, if any, that is available for building construction and repair. Likewise, the failure of the state to fully fund its share of postsecondary area vocational school tuition is short-sighted because it shortchanges and compromises the state's ability to maintain a highly trained workforce. It also flies in the face of avowed state policy to provide options to students who want to prepare for an occupation that does not require a baccalaureate degree. (For FY 2000, the State Board is requesting an increase of more than 6 percent, compared to the 1.8 percent increase approved by the Legislature for FY 1999 over FY 1998.) With regard to the Wichita situation, the Committee considers the arrangement between the Wichita Board of Education and the technical college a local matter. However, it notes that information provided by the State Department seems to support the contention that the Wichita Area Technical College receives less funding for secondary students from its sponsoring district than do any of its counterparts.

Washburn University

Goals and Strategic Planning. Washburn University has embarked on a series of initiatives intended to position the University for the next century, according to its President, Jerry Farley. The direction the University is taking does not necessarily depend upon affiliation with the

Regents' system, but instead seeks a stable and enhanced state funding base upon which to build. Activities include a three-year review of programs intended to align resources with the programs that are most important to the institution's mission. Other initiatives include an intensive leadership program to prepare students to fill leadership roles in the public and private sector; two-plus-two programs with Johnson County and Kansas City, Kansas Community Colleges; and programs to help students succeed in college.

The programs for student success involve the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLSS) that helps students develop study skills, provides access to advisors and computers, and makes specific classes available, and the "Prescription for Freshman Success" program. Students in the Freshman Success program take prescribed courses and are limited to 12 hours per semester for the first year. They also are given intensive advising and get help from tutors. Those who do well after the first year are taken out of the program and proceed with their college careers as regular students.

Committee Comment. The Committee commends Washburn University and Dr. Farley for the initiatives being taken to make the University a viable institution in the years to come. In particular, the Committee is impressed with the programs the University had developed to help students do well in college. Not only will these programs avoid wasting public funds and student tuition on unsuccessful college careers, but, more importantly, they will conserve and nurture human resources by helping all students benefit from college educations. The Committee intends to watch with interest the implementation of these programs.

Student Financial Assistance

Professional Scholarship Programs. Legislation was introduced during the 1998 Session (H.B. 2753) that would have made some of the provisions of certain professional scholarship programs administered by the Kansas Board of Regents consistent and would have made other policy changes. No action was taken on the bill and a subcommittee of the Senate Ways and Means Committee recommended that the bill be studied during the interim.

The Kansas Board of Regents administers a number of scholarship programs for persons entering specific professions that have a service component whereby, for each year a scholarship is received, the practitioner must work one year in the profession or else must pay back the scholarship. The scholarships affected by the bill are the Kansas Nursing Student Scholarship Program, the Osteopathic Scholarship Program, the Teacher Scholarship Program, and the Optometry Education Program.

A unique feature of the Nursing Student Scholarship Program is the sponsorship component, which requires each nursing student who receives a scholarship to have a sponsor–a medical care facility, psychiatric hospital, or adult care home–to provide a scholarship match to the nursing student in an amount equal to the state's contribution. Pursuant to an agreement with the sponsor, the nursing student must agree to work for the sponsor for each year a scholarship is received.

A controversial feature of the proposed bill would have eliminated the sponsorship feature, apparently because not enough hospitals and other facilities are willing to sponsor a nursing student. As a result, some state money for nursing scholarships is not allocated because of a lack of a match. Representatives of the Kansas Nurses' Association and the Kansas Hospital Association oppose the elimination of the sponsorships because they believe the program is working well and commits nurses to work for hospitals and other health care facilities after they graduate, thereby helping the facilities get the nurses they need.

In order to work out an agreement acceptable to the parties involved, the Committee asked the staff to meet with staff from the Office of the Board of Regents and representatives of the affected professions to make recommendations to the Committee concerning desired changes. The

Committee also wanted the Ethnic Minority Fellowship Program and the Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Program included in the discussion.

Committee Recommendation. The Committee supports professional scholarship programs in general and, in fact, recommended legislation to create some of the programs. In order to make the programs easier to administer, the Committee recommends the introduction of legislation to update certain features of the programs and to make the programs more consistent. Major components of the Committee's recommendations are the following:

- Expand the scope of the original bill to include all of the professional scholarship programs administered by the State Board of Regents: the Kansas Nursing Student Scholarship Program, the Osteopathic Scholarship Program, the Teacher Scholarship Program, the Optometry Education Program, the Ethnic Minority Fellowship Program, and the Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Program.
- Expand the list of eligible sponsors for nursing students to include licensed home health agencies and local health departments. Expanding the list conforms to the original intent of the scholarship program, which is to give facilities that need nurses a way of securing a commitment from a nursing student to work for the facility after graduation. It also addresses the concern that there are not enough sponsors to match the state portion of the scholarships by expanding the list of eligible sponsors.
- Add "working in parts of the state where there is a critical shortage of teachers" to the list of ways in which a student can satisfy the service obligation under the Teacher Scholarship Program. Currently, the only way the obligation can be satisfied is by teaching in a "hard-to-fill teaching discipline," as determined by the State Board of Education. The Committee thinks the program should be expanded to recognize that some parts of the state have a hard time finding teachers in *all* teaching disciplines and the need to distribute teachers to parts of the state where they are needed is just as important as addressing teacher shortages in specific disciplines. The determination of geographic areas where there is a teacher shortage would be made by the State Board of Education.
- Reconcile the definitions of "primary care" in the Osteopathic Scholarship Program to make them consistent. In one section, primary care is defined to include emergency medicine, in addition to general pediatrics, general internal medicine, family medicine, and family practice. In another section, the definition omits emergency medicine and includes obstetrics and gynecology. The Committee's recommendation is that both emergency medicine and obstetrics and gynecology be included in the definition of primary care.
- Add the reason of "family leave," as defined in the federal Family Medical Leave Act, to the list of reasons why the service obligation could be deferred. The law currently allows students to defer their service obligations for reasons that are specified in the statutes, such as active military service or temporary medical disability. The Committee's recommendation would add to the list reasons that are contained in the federal Family Medical Leave Act, such as pregnancy or having to provide care for a family member.
- Add an "extenuating circumstances" reason, as determined by the Kansas Board of Regents, to the list of reasons why the service obligation could be deferred. The Committee thinks there may be reasons why a student legitimately should be granted a longer time before having to begin the service obligations that are not listed in the statutes. For that reason, it wants to give the Kansas Board of Regents the authority to approve a continuation of the deferment period when a student is able to present convincing evidence that an extenuating circumstance exits.
- Add training in residency programs or other similar programs to the list of reasons why the service obligation could be deferred for optometry graduates. The Committee thinks

graduates of optometry programs who serve a residency should be allowed to complete their residencies before they are required to begin fulfilling their service obligations.

- Standardize the grace period between the time a person is eligible to work and must begin to fulfill the service requirement to six months. Presently, the programs are inconsistent and grace periods range from six to nine months.
- Increase the maximum amount of the scholarship that can be awarded annually to 70 percent of the average cost of attendance, except that the amount cannot exceed 70 percent of the cost of enrolling in the program at a Regents institution. Awards would be subject to appropriation. The present law sets dollar amounts for each program, ranging from $3,500 annually for the nursing program to $15,000 for the osteopathic and advanced registered nurse practitioner programs. Information presented to the Committee indicates that these limits were set some years ago and that the cost of education has risen. Making the awards a percent of average actual costs eliminates the need to revise the statutes periodically to reflect changes in the cost of the educational programs.
- Change the name of all the programs to include the word "service" as part of the program title, as in Osteopathic *Service* Scholarship Program and Teacher *Service* Scholarship Program. The change would make it clear that the scholarships impose a service commitment unless the recipient chooses to repay the award.
- Lower the interest rate imposed on scholarship amounts that are repaid from 15 percent to rates tied to United States Treasury bills, plus 3 percent. In any given year, all students who contract to participate in a service scholarship would be subject to the same payback interest rate. The interest rate in effect the first year a student enters the program would remain the same for that student for succeeding years.
- Make the reasons how an obligation may be satisfied consistent for all programs.
- Give the Kansas Board of Regents the option of serving as the collection agency for scholarships being repaid or contracting with a private service to collect the repayments. Currently, the Board does not have the option to contract the collection of scholarship repayments to an outside firm.
- Allow practitioners to work part-time, as long as they work at least half-time, to fulfill the service obligation. That is, a practitioner could work half-time for two years for each year of committed service. Presently, a graduate must work full-time for a year for each year a scholarship is received.

The Committee also recommends that the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, and the House and Senate Education Committees pay particular attention to developing trends as to shortages of teachers and make sure that there is adequate funding for the Teacher Scholarship Program. In addition, the Committee asks the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee to consider funding the Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Program, which currently is unfunded.

Postsecondary Education Savings Plans. 1998 S.B. 402 directs the State Treasurer to conduct a feasibility study of postsecondary education savings plans. The State Treasurer is to report the study's findings to a joint meeting of the House and Senate Education Committees by January 15, 1999.

Clyde Graeber, State Treasurer, appointed a ten-member task force consisting of representatives of public and private higher education institutions, teachers, students, bankers, the Governor, the State Department of Revenue, and the State Treasurer's Office.

Early on, the task force rejected the idea of recommending a prepaid tuition plan because it believed prepaid tuition plans have the potential to obligate educational institutions and state governments to absorb future tuition increases that exceed the amount of money in the savings plan. The task force also believed there is little legislative support for prepaid tuition plans.

Underlying the task force's assumptions are several key principles:

- Any plan should make full use of the federal tax code to achieve the most favorable tax treatment for plan beneficiaries.
- The savings plan should be applicable to any postsecondary institution in or outside Kansas that meets federal student aid eligibility guidelines, *i.e.*, public and private two- and four-year institutions, vocational schools, and accredited not-for-profit schools.
- The plan should be exempt from federal and Kansas taxes.
- The State Treasurer's Office should be authorized to receive, administer, invest, disperse, and dispose of funds credited to higher education savings accounts.

Committee Recommendation. The Committee supports the principles identified by the State Treasurer's task force and requests that the standing Education Committees of both houses review the task force's report and recommend the introduction of legislation to implement a postsecondary education savings plan in Kansas.

Student Financial Aid Programs Administered by the Kansas Board of Regents. The Committee received a report from the Kansas Board of Regents on student assistance programs totaling more than $14.0 million that are administered by the Board of Regents. The report included the Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program and the Vocational Scholarship Program.

The recently-enacted Kansas Comprehensive Grant Program combines three need-based scholarships: the Kansas Regents Grant, the Tuition Grant for students attending independent colleges and universities, and the Washburn Grant. Combining the three programs makes it easier for the Board of Regents to administer and makes it possible to move money from one program to another, if necessary. It also makes it easier for students to understand and access the programs.

Information also was received about effects of the federal 1997 Taxpayer Relief Act. The Act generally is considered to be a departure from federal policy dating back to the 1970s that placed primary importance on the federal government providing assistance to low-income and, to a lesser degree, middle-income students. The 1997 legislation seems to benefit families in the middle annual income range of $40,000 to $80,000. The possibility that additional federal funding for student assistance will be an incentive for educational institutions to increase tuition raises the concern that low-income students will be hit twice: their tuition will go up and they no longer are the targeted group for federal student assistance. This possibility makes it important that states monitor developments that have a bearing on federal student assistance in order to make sure that students, particularly from low-income families, that formerly qualified for student financial assistance will continue to have the resources they need to take advantage of available educational opportunities.

Committee Comment. The Committee is concerned that low- and lower-middle income students could be hurt by the effect of the 1997 federal Taxpayer Relief Act on student assistance programs. Data presented to the Committee show that, the higher a person's educational attainment, the more likely it is that the person will be employed and will make a higher salary. There also is information showing that students who work more than 15 hours a week while they are in college are less likely to graduate from college on time.

Any federal policy that serves as a disincentive to provide student financial assistance to students who are the most needy is a policy the state should monitor and, if necessary, take steps to counteract. The role of the state should be to make sure that state financial aid programs are in place and are adequately funded. For that reason, the Committee asks the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the House Appropriations Committee to carefully review the appropriations requests by the Kansas Board of Regents for need-based scholarships and ensure that the programs are adequately funded.

Postsecondary Education—General

Education Commission of the States. Dr. Kay McClenney, Vice President of the Education Commission of the States (ECS), met with the Committee to discuss the role of ECS and to interact with legislators and others involved in postsecondary education reform. For purposes of Dr. McClenney's presentation, the Committee invited five members of the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education and representatives of all sectors of public postsecondary education to meet with it. (The Governor's Task Force has been charged with making recommendations to the Governor by the end of December concerning postsecondary education reform.)

Kansas has been a member state of ECS for many years. Although the compact encompasses elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, a particular effort is being made this year to strengthen the Commission's postsecondary education role. One reason for the focus is that, even though the United States has one of the best systems of higher education in the world, pressures on the system mean that continued preeminence is not assured. The pressures include changes in the types of students who enroll in postsecondary education, competition with traditional institutions from a variety of new sources such as the Internet, and technological developments that make usual delivery systems obsolete.

An important change, according to Dr. McClenney, is a shift in priority from access to accountability. Historically, the United States has considered education a means to social and economic mobility. However, as public resources become scarce and the public demands more justification for the expenditure of public money, institutions of higher education increasingly are being held to higher standards of accountability. What that means is that greater attention at both the institutional and state levels will be focused on developing performance indicators and ways to measure the return on state dollars invested in public institutions.

Addressing specific policy issues of concern to Kansas legislators, Dr. McClenney told policymakers to spend time amassing data to support their positions before they embark on major changes in the system. She also said that, if voluntary cooperation among the various educational sectors has not already worked in Kansas, there probably is no reason to think it will work eventually.

Committee Comment. The Committee received favorable comments from participants and others about Dr. McClenney's presentation. Comments made during the round-table discussion were pertinent and candid and triggered the Committee's interest in scheduling a similar event again. The postsecondary education conference the Committee has sponsored for more than 15 years also has served as a forum for the discussion of issues among the sectors, but members agree that the alternative of devoting a portion of a regular Committee meeting to a session involving representatives of all postsecondary education sectors is an alternative to the conference that should be considered in future years.

The Committee also is interested in serving as a forum for the discussion of the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on Higher Education. The Task Force's report to the Governor is expected to be made by the end of the year and it is likely the Governor will address the report in his message to the 1999 Legislature. The Committee's chairperson, Representative Empson, has written a letter to the co-chair of the Task Force, Lieutenant Governor Sherrer, inviting him to participate in a discussion of the Task Force's recommendations at the beginning of the 1999 Session. If Lieutenant Governor Sherrer accepts the Committee's invitation, the plan is for the LEPC to host a joint meeting of the standing education committees, members of the Task Force, members of the Kansas Board of Regents, members of the State Board of Education, and other representatives of higher education for the purpose of discussing postsecondary education reform. It is possible Dr. McClenney would be invited to interact with participants and comment on the recommendations presented.

Midwest Higher Education Commission.

David Murphy, President of the Midwestern Higher Education Commission (MHEC), met with the Committee to report on activities of the Commission and to review the recommendations of a policy summit of member states that identified major postsecondary education issues. Individuals who participated in the summit and who were involved in activities of the Commission also participated in the meeting.

Savings to member states as the result of participation in MHEC projects are estimated to be about $21.4 million for the period of 1994 through 1997. Most of the savings are due to participation in the Midwest Student Exchange Program. New projects include the development of interactive courseware to be used by college and university faculty and a study of the feasibility of the electronic exchange of courses and programs.

The purpose of the higher education policy summit was to bring together policymakers to exchange ideas and identify important higher education issues in each state. In all, 110 state political and higher education leaders met in June 1998 to formulate the recommendations contained in a final report. The report will be disseminated widely throughout member states and the hope is that each state will convene its own summit to discuss issues that are particular to it and begin to implement the recommendations.

Remedial Education. A survey of Regents institutions, Washburn University, and community colleges was made to obtain information about remedial education courses taught in school year 1997-98. The survey shows that all the public two- and four-year institutions offered remedial courses, and almost three-quarters of them were offered by community colleges. Although the mission statements of the Regents universities do not prohibit offering remedial education courses, it is the community colleges that have been explicitly directed by the State Board of Education to provide the programs. This is consistent with national trends.

Remedial math accounted for more than 70 percent of the courses offered, followed by English (19 percent) and reading (8 percent). Information provided the Committee indicates that many students who take mathematics courses take them as refresher courses, as prerequisites to other courses, or simply because they have been out of school awhile and are afraid to take college-level math courses.

Although the survey did not report information on the age of remedial education students, it is known that many adults who have been out of school for some time comprise part of the group of students who need remediation. One area of interest to the Committee as a future study topic is the distinction between recent high school graduates who take remedial education courses because they lack basic skills in reading, English, and mathematics and nontraditional students who simply need refresher courses.

Information presented to the Committee indicates that students who need remediation in reading may have a comprehensive literacy problem that could lower their chances of completing a degree. Students who take courses in English and mathematics, particularly if they only take one course, do about the same as students who are not enrolled in remedial courses. It is not known what effect new admissions standards to be imposed on the freshman class entering Regents institutions in school year 2001-02 will have on remedial education programs, although information presented to the Committee indicates that the effect may be minimal.

Committee Comment. The Committee intends to monitor the offering of remedial education programs, as it has in the past. In addition to monitoring the effect the qualified admissions policy will have on remedial offerings, the Committee also is interested in distinguishing between the needs of recent high school graduates and nontraditional students.

In the Committee's view, the fact that community colleges provide the majority of remedial education courses is appropriate and in keeping with the role the Legislature believes the institutions should play. The Committee commends the State Board of Education for clearly defining

the role the community colleges are to play in this regard and for establishing guidelines within which the courses are provided.

Concurrent Enrollment. During the 1998 Legislature, interest in the number of credit hours that were being counted for both high school and college credit resulted in a survey of concurrent enrollments at Regents institutions, Washburn University, community colleges, and independent colleges and universities. Information provided by the State Department of Education shows that, in school year 1997-98, 83,621 credit hours were generated by high school students who were concurrently enrolled in college courses. Many of these courses were taught at the high school by high school teachers who had been engaged by the postsecondary institution as adjunct professors.

Information provided the Committee by representatives of a community college and a Regents institution indicated that the schools have guidelines to ensure that courses offered for concurrent credit meet the same standards of quality as all other courses. At the end of the interim, the Committee was told that the State Board of Education, as part of its postsecondary education planning goals for 1998-2000, intends to develop concurrent enrollment guidelines for implementation in FY 2000.

Committee Comment. The Committee supports the policy of allowing high school students to get a head start on college and recognizes that concurrent enrollments are based on two principles the Committee generally endorses: the smooth transition between secondary and postsecondary education and competency-based education which places more importance on what a student learns than on the mechanics of the program delivery system.

Nevertheless, the Committee has questions about concurrent enrollments that it intends to pursue during the 1999 interim. The questions center mainly on how the courses are funded and how quality is maintained. The Committee also will be able to study concurrent enrollments in the context of the new guidelines being developed by the State Board of Education.

Amendments to the Dental Practice Act. Legislation enacted by the 1998 Legislature relating to the Dental Practices Act (H.B. 2724) made changes relating to dental hygienists and directed the State Board of Education, the State Board of Regents, and the Kansas Dental Board to report to the 1999 Legislature on plans for increasing the number of persons being trained as dental hygienists in Kansas.

Representatives of the Kansas Dental Association, public and private postsecondary institutions that have dental hygiene programs, and the State Board of Education formed a task force in response to the legislation. Representatives of the task force told the Committee that they have been meeting to identify the shortage of dental hygienists in the state and to formulate recommendations. Using the standard of one hygienist needed for each 2,000 population, the group has determined that Kansas has a shortage of 265 dental hygienists. However, there also is a maldistribution of hygienists that makes some parts of the state relatively well-served and other parts underserved.

A final report on the findings and recommendations of the group will be presented to the 1999 Legislature.

Teacher Supply and Demand. Leo W. Pauls, Executive Director of the Jones Institute for Educational Excellence, Emporia State University, presented information about the supply and demand for elementary-secondary teachers for the period 1972-1997. He reported that the number of teachers being prepared declined sharply by more than 50 percent from 1972 to 1981. The decline continued for the next five years until 1987, but at a much slower rate. The number of teachers being prepared generally leveled off from 1988 to 1996, but slight declines for the last three years could mean that a new trend of declining numbers of new teachers is beginning. Dr. Pauls noted that, when a shortage occurs for a particular teaching field, it usually

takes between five to seven years before enough students graduate to meet the need. An emerging area of shortage is the field of mathematics.

According to Dr. Pauls, data on teacher supply as perceived by school district superintendents indicates that the supply of elementary teachers is considered generally to be adequate, although the areas of counseling and library science are experiencing shortages. Some shortages are perceived to be at the secondary level, and include the fields of foreign language, computer science, music, and counseling. One finding of interest is the reversal in the availability of candidates on the basis of school size–in 1980, districts under 400 enrollment had the lowest availability of candidates for positions. The 1996 data show that the smallest enrollment category has the greatest availability of candidates.

A shortage of special education teachers was reported in most areas of the state. The number of special education vacancies in 1996 increased over those reported in 1995, but shifts in demands for special education teachers for various areas of exceptionality also were noticed. Areas in which there are critical and near-critical teaching shortages include speech/language and physical and occupational therapy, while shortages in other areas such as behavior disorders and learning disabilities are less critical than they were in prior years. Dr. Pauls also identified the areas of "interrelated" and early childhood as special education fields that provide the best employment opportunities.

Information provided by the State Department of Education based on reports submitted by school district superintendents each year shows that for the 1998-99 school year there are 189.2 vacancies for certified personnel, an increase of 70 percent over the prior school year. Of the 189.2 vacancies, 79.2 (42 percent) are in special education.

Committee Comment. The persistence of teacher shortages, particularly in areas such as special education, underscores the Committee's conviction that student financial assistance is needed to ensure a steady supply of well-trained teachers. The Committee hopes that its recommended change to the Teacher Scholarship Program, which would define "critically underserved area" to include geographically underserved areas as well as teaching fields, will address the difficulties some districts have in finding teachers. The Committee is mindful that attrition, as well as a shortage of graduates, contributes to teaching vacancies and expresses its concern that many teachers, particularly in the field of special education, experience burnout and leave the profession.

The Committee plans to monitor issues relating to the supply and demand for teachers. It also wishes to commend the Jones Institute for Educational Excellence at Emporia State University for the quality and relevance of the reports on education that it produces.

Appropriations from the Economic Development Initiatives Fund for Education. Proceeds from the sale of lottery tickets and taxes on parimutuel wagering are credited to the State Gaming Revenue Fund, from which money is credited to the Economic Development Initiatives Fund (EDIF). By law, expenditures from the EDIF must be made for programs that support the maintenance and expansion of the state's economic foundation. Much of the money from the EDIF is used for education because the state's economic development effort depends, in part, on a well-trained workforce and on research conducted by institutions of higher education.

For FY 1999, approved expenditures from the EDIF total $47.1 million. Agencies or funds that will receive money from the EDIF include the Department of Commerce and Housing, Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation, the State Department of Education, the Department of Wildlife and Parks, and the State Water Plan Fund. Examples of money that will be used for educational purposes include approved expenditures of $9.9 million for the State Department of Education for postsecondary aid for area vocational schools and technical colleges, vocational education capital outlay aid, and technology innovation grants. Educational expenditures from the EDIF for the Department of Commerce and Housing total $20.1 million and include

money for the Kansas Industrial Training (KIT) and Kansas Industrial Retraining (KIR) programs, grants for postsecondary institution training equipment, and small business development centers located at 22 universities and community colleges. Funding from the EDIF that is appropriated to the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation for educational purposes is used to enhance the research capabilities of the public universities. Programs include grants to university centers of excellence, the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), the Advanced Research Matching Grant Program, and funding for graduate interns.

Transfer and Articulation Agreements. Representatives of the State Department of Education, community colleges, and Regents universities presented information to the Committee about articulation and transfer agreements between and among public postsecondary institutions. Under the basic agreement that governs transfers from community colleges to Regents institutions, a student who completes an associate degree based on a baccalaureate-oriented program will be accepted with junior class standing and will have met the general education requirements of a Regents university. A second agreement applies to movement among area vocational schools, technical colleges, and community colleges. The agreement provides for the transferability of substantially equivalent courses and programs among all postsecondary institutions, including the Regents institutions.

Transfer and articulation among the institutions is enhanced by such things as online computers to access information, the electronic transfer of transcripts, guides that identify courses that transfer, and institutional consortia and duel academic advising programs.

Weighted Grade Point Averages. Some high schools in Kansas have begun assigning weights to classes that are more difficult, such as core curriculum and honors classes. The purpose of the weights is to differentiate between classes that are hard and those that are not, so that students who take the difficult classes will have higher grades. In order to better understand how the weighted grade point system works and to find out how students, parents, and educators feel about it, the Committee intends to make weighted grade points one of its study topics during the 1999 interim.